

NORTHWEST MISSOURIAN

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2022

MARYVILLE, MISSOURI

NWMISSOURINEWS.COM

VOL. 110, NO. 21

@THEMISSOURIAN



Water quality still among top community complaints



ADDALYNN BRADBURY PHOTO EDITOR

Councilman Tye Parsons speaks at the Feb. 14 City Council meeting hosted at Maryville Public Safety. The City Council announced construction on the South Main Corridor Improvement Project. Phase I is moving along 30-60 days ahead of schedule.

Construction on South Main ahead of schedule, Phase I set for fall completion

SIDNEY LOWRY
News Editor | @sidney_lowry

Since 2017, City Council has been taking the heat from Maryville community members about the water quality. Five years later, residents are still coming before the Council to express their concerns.

Resident Billy Mires kicked off the Feb. 14 City Council meeting by addressing the Mozingo watershed quality.

"I think that we can all agree, basically, you have an issue with the water, basically, coming out of your lake and into the sink," Mires said.

Mires said he is currently attempting to put 227 acres of his land into the Conservation Reserve Program and the Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative in an effort to put in saturation buffers that would ultimately improve the

water quality.

Signed into law in 1985, the CRP is a partnership with the Farm Service Agency from the U.S. Department of Agriculture in which, in exchange for a yearly rental payment, farmers agree to remove environmentally sensitive land that will improve the environment. In Mires case, he is focused on improving the water quality on his land.

As the deadline for applications for the CRP approaches in the beginning of March, Mires called on the Council to reach out to state officials and let them know Maryville has an ongoing water problem, one that has been in the center of its government for years, in order to find more support in fixing the issues.

"I would like to fix the problem, but I'm only one guy and I only have so much money," he said.

SEE COUNCIL | A4

“

I would like to fix the problem, but I'm only one guy and I only have so much money.”

-BILLY Mires

Grad enrollment continues to rise, makes Northwest history

SIDNEY LOWRY
News Editor | @sidney_lowry

Higher education enrollment fell another 2.7% this past fall, while Northwest's enrollment hit a new record high. Northwest's spring 2022 census shows the highest spring overall enrollment in University history with 7,218 students, a 5% increase in enrollment compared to last spring.

As enrollment across the nation continues to fall, Northwest seems to be hitting peak enrollment numbers every census since 2017. So, who's to credit?

Despite the decline in undergraduate and first-time freshman enrollment, in the past few years, the University has seen an exponential growth in graduate students, who make up 36% of

overall enrollment.

One-third of the graduate programs Northwest offers are online programs, but Associate Provost of Graduate and Professional Studies Greg Haddock said online graduate students make up more than half of graduate students.

"The indication that we're still growing is that we are in a second year of a spring term, where a spring term actually has a larger enrollment than the previous fall," Haddock said.

"That's not typical at the graduate level; it certainly isn't typical at the undergraduate level."

Haddock said the plan for graduate enrollment was created around seven years ago to increase international graduate enrollment and online graduate

enrollment, as well as to make sure there was an enrollment strategy to make up for gaps.

He credits part of the rise in graduate enrollment this year to international students taking interest in online programs through Northwest.

"Half of the enrollment growth has also been graduate international growth that started in the fall, and it continued into the spring. And it is very welcome to see that interest in our programs. It's actually flattering," Haddock said.

While graduate enrollment is up overall, the master's programs saw a 4.6% increase in first-time students, and the specialist programs are down 4%.

SEE ENROLLMENT | A4

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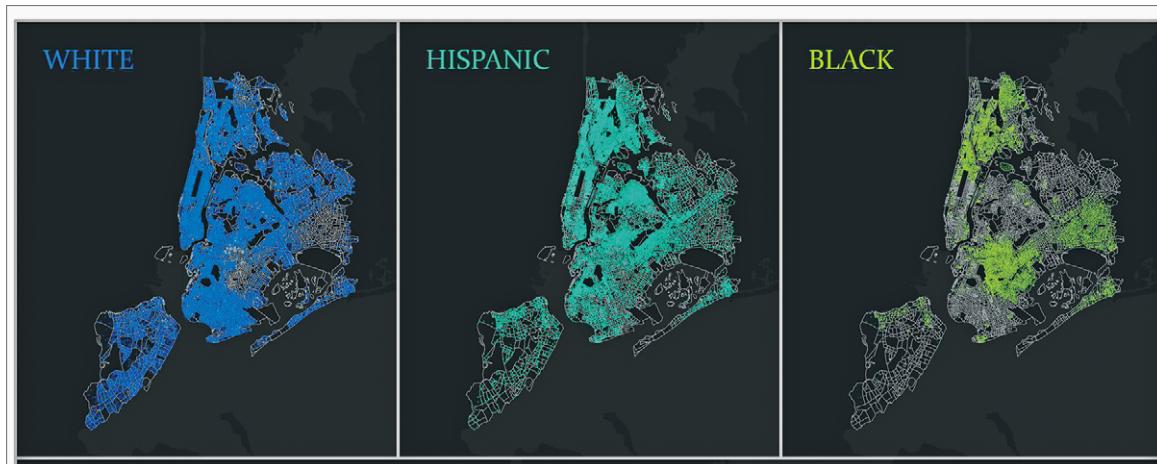
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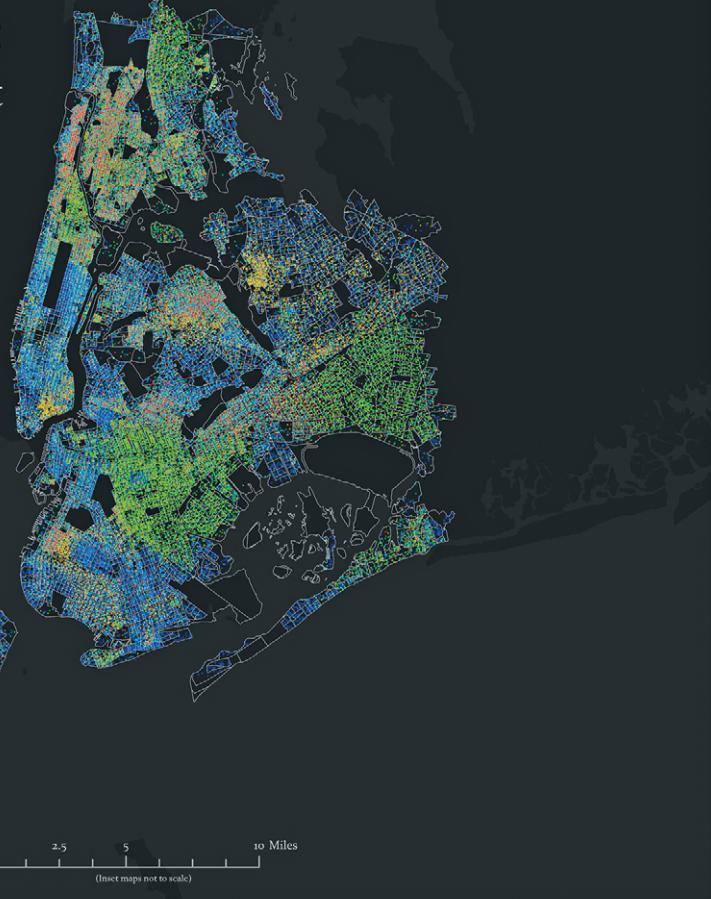
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SUBMITTED

NW Black fraternities celebrate Black history

KENNEDY KALVODA
News Reporter I @KKalvoda1

he worked his way up in the fraternity after he joined.

“One of the first people I met here was a member of Alpha Phi Alpha. Hanging out with people in that organization and seeing the work they do and seeing how much they look out for the communities around them lines up with the morals that I have grown up with,” Adesope said.

Adesope said that in Nigeria, where he is from originally, fraternities and sororities aren’t viewed in the best light and are often looked down on because of the partying. Joining one was his way of proving that stereotype wrong and having opportunities to do good things.

“A lot of international students when they come here, they don’t really have a lot to show aside from the fact that they came to school here. And so, I wanted to be able to say that I did this, I impacted this person’s life, I did this for this community, aside from just coming to school here,” Adesope said.

Having Black fraternities on campus is important, he said, because there are primarily white sororities and fraternities at Northwest.

“It’s a way for people of my color to be able to find something they feel they truly belong to and feel comfortable with doing,” Adesope said.

Adesope said most fraternities work to make sure that what they do goes beyond just college.

“Most of the work they (college clubs and organizations) do ends in college. It doesn’t go beyond that. But in the NPHC, it’s a for-life thing. You keep doing the work that you started while you were in college. You keep serving the people regardless of if you are in college or not,” Adesope said.

Black fraternities play a part in preserving and discussing Black history, Adesope said, because of the work the founders of these fraternities and sororities do.

-ISAAC ADESOPe
ALPHA PHI ALPHA
SECRETARY

Omega Psi Phi Chapter President Edwyn Brown said something unique about Black fraternities and sororities is the way they were started.

“Black fraternities and sororities started out underground, and they had to sneak into meetings. I also feel like it’s a more tight unit because I could talk to a chapter brother from the ‘90s right now,” Brown said.

Alpha Phi Alpha Secretary Isaac Adesope said he didn’t really know anything about fraternities and sororities in the U.S. as an international student, but

“It does play a major role in Black history because Alpha Phi Alpha was the first Black fraternity to ever exist. It started as a social studies club at Cornell University. Even though it wasn’t an idea that was supported by every single Black person, it was still something our founders were steadfast enough to put in the work for,” Adesope said.

Adesope also said that in order to be in a Black fraternity, you have to have a sense of brotherhood, community, and you have to look out for people around you.

“It’s not just for the parties or the fun of it. There’s actual serious work going on while doing this,” Adesope said.

Brown said Black fraternities are important to have on campus because they promote diversity and make people feel included while they are at North-

Student gets published in book of maps

JOE CONNELLY
Missourian Reporter I @TheMissourian

Northwest graduate student Tyler Morton began creating a map as a part of a class project. Now, he’s getting it published.

Morton’s multivariate dot density map was created to illustrate racial distribution in New York City. It will be published in the Esri Map Book, used to showcase skilled mapmakers from around the world.

Morton, who currently resides in Broomfield, Colorado, began creating the map in his cartographic design and visualization class while pursuing his graduate degree. The project gave general outlines for creating a multivariate dot density map. These maps are used to visualize the geographic distribution of an overall population, as well as the genetic diversity of groups within that population.

He used U.S. Census Bureau data to create the map in Northwest professor Yi-Hwa Wu’s cartographic design and visualization course. Esri, a global leader in geographic information science software, will publish the map in its annual “Esri Map Book” in July.

“I picked New York City since I found it visually appealing and relevant to the subject with it being America’s melting pot,” Morton said. “Overall, it was the class assignment that pushed me to create the map. After making it for that assignment, I just loved the way it turned out.”

About 90% of the map he submitted for publication was completed in his class, and the final 10% was finishing touches he made after deciding to sub-

mit it. He said he sees its publication as a sort of validation of his chosen path and hard work.

“Many projects you’re just trying to get through, learn the underlying lessons and have a nice product to turn in. This map I got obsessed with once I began to see it come together,” Morton said. “It’s funny; I think I saved seven to eight different versions before I ever planned on submitting it for the ‘Esri Map Book.’”

Northwest’s geographic information science master’s program is an online program for professionals working in conservation energy, intelligence, police, military or health industries who aspire to be at the forefront of data collection to uncover patterns and solve complex geo-spatial challenges.

The online program at Northwest has allowed him to balance personal and career activities with his desire to earn an advanced degree, Morton said, and the journey has been rewarding.

“For the first time, I’ve managed to maintain a 4.0 GPA, which has been one of the proudest accomplishments of my life. It has made the late nights and busy weekends worth it.”

Morton said he did not know what the GIS program was when he was an undergraduate. So he got a business administration degree and tried to keep an eye open for new opportunities.

“Always keep learning. Continue to build on the knowledge you have and don’t be afraid to go back to the drawing board and start down a new career path,” Morton said. “Just because you picked a profession to pursue at 20 does not mean you have to stick with that for the rest of your life.”

west, and they play a significant role in Black history as a whole.

“Anything about Black history is going to be more respected if it’s told by a Black person,” Brown said.

For Adesope, being a part of a Black fraternity means a lifetime of service to people and being a part of something greater than himself.

“It means I am a part of a long history of great men that I also have to live up to and surpass,” Adesope said. “I’m part of something that will forever be remembered. It’s a lifetime of knowing that people have your back. You will always find a brother no matter where you are in the world.”



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Omicron variant loses grip, positivity rate cut in half

NATHAN ENGLISH
Managing Editor | @nathan_3nglish

Less than a month removed from omicron's peak, COVID-19 cases are down 77% in Nodaway County and have fallen to the lowest rate since November 2021. Northwest has fewer than 10 active cases for the first time since Halloween.

Tom Patterson, administrator of the Nodaway County Health Department, said it appears the worst of the newest variant is over.

"Here we are a couple of months out, and it appears to have run its course," Patterson said.

Coronavirus-related statistics across the board have begun to turn the corner as omicron's presence weakens across the state and country. As of Tuesday, Mosaic - Maryville had no patients hospitalized with a COVID-19. The county's positivity rate has been nearly halved from 35% to 17.8% in just two weeks.

Nate Blackford, president of Mosaic - Maryville, said the hospital's rate has followed a similar pattern, falling from around 40% to 20% in the same time frame. Blackford added that the volume of tests being performed by the hospital is also down. The number of caregivers out with

the virus, a tall hurdle Mosaic was forced to overcome during the variant's spike, has greatly reduced along with cases.

The county currently ranks fifth in Missouri in cases per 100,000 with 335, and it ranks 38th in positivity rate. Cases are down over 42% from the past seven days in the state.

"It doesn't feel like it," Patterson said of the county's ranking.

Both Patterson and Blackford, in addition to Lt. Amanda Cullin — member of the Crisis Response Team 2 at Northwest — said they are optimistic about the trajectory of the virus, hoping the crisis with COVID-19 is over for now. All acknowledged the virus won't be dissipating completely locally, but, hopefully, it won't always be at the forefront of public health decisions.

"Unless something changes drastically, we're looking at pulling back on some of the daily operations (related to COVID-19)," Cullin said.

There has been discussion of reducing virus mitigation efforts at Northwest, but no concrete plans have been put into place, Cullin said. Spring break, a time officials may be eyeing to test out mitigation reductions, is less than a month away.

Northwest's current mask mandate took effect Oct. 25, reducing the places masks were required, from everywhere indoors on campus to classrooms and meeting spaces where social distancing wasn't possible.

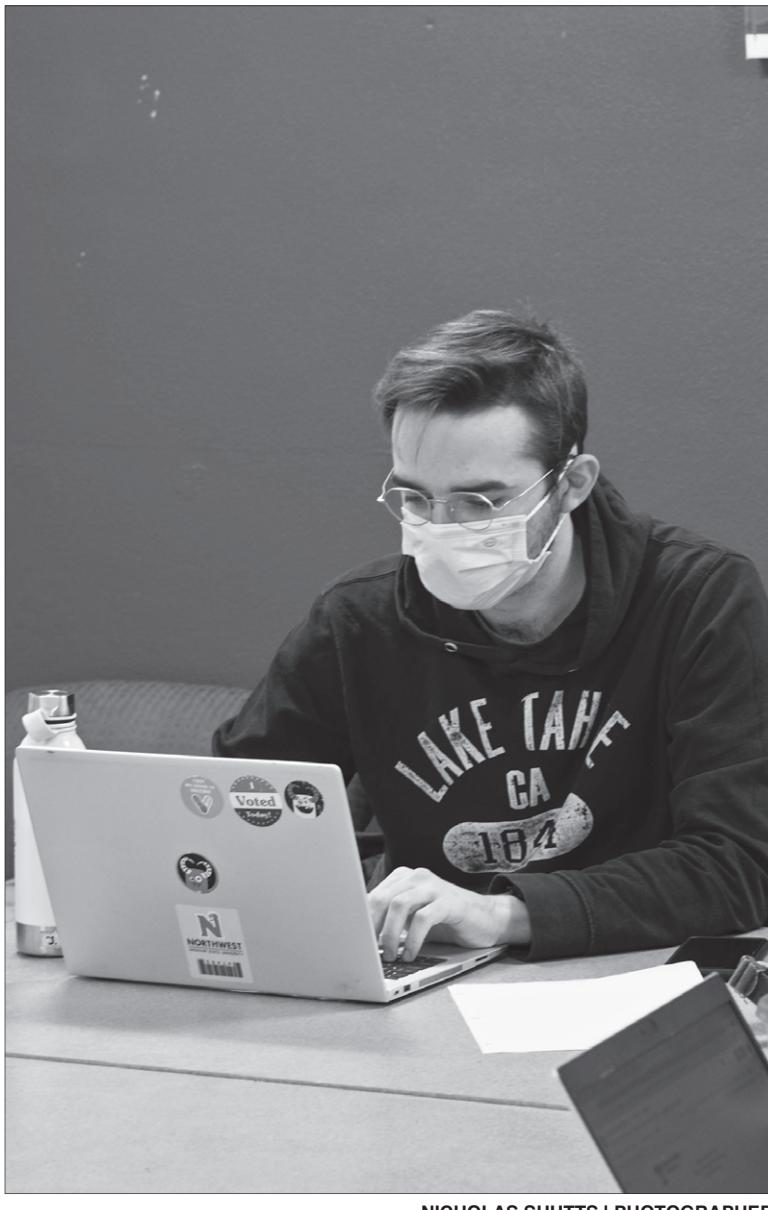
Mitigation changes have already been made in numerous states around the country. Democrat-led states have begun to roll back statewide mask mandates. Patterson said he wouldn't be surprised if the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention updated its guidelines and protocols when it comes to COVID-19.

"There's buzz that even mask guidance is going to be updated," Patterson said.

The CDC updated its quarantine guidelines to 5 days of isolation from the previous 10 days Dec. 27.

The focus still remains on getting individuals fully vaccinated with a booster. Nodaway County has yet to cross the 50% threshold for fully vaccinated individuals, currently sitting at 47.8%.

Officials are once again cautious, all citing a new variant could be on the horizon. Right now, however, they said they are pleased with the loosening of the virus's grip on public health locally.

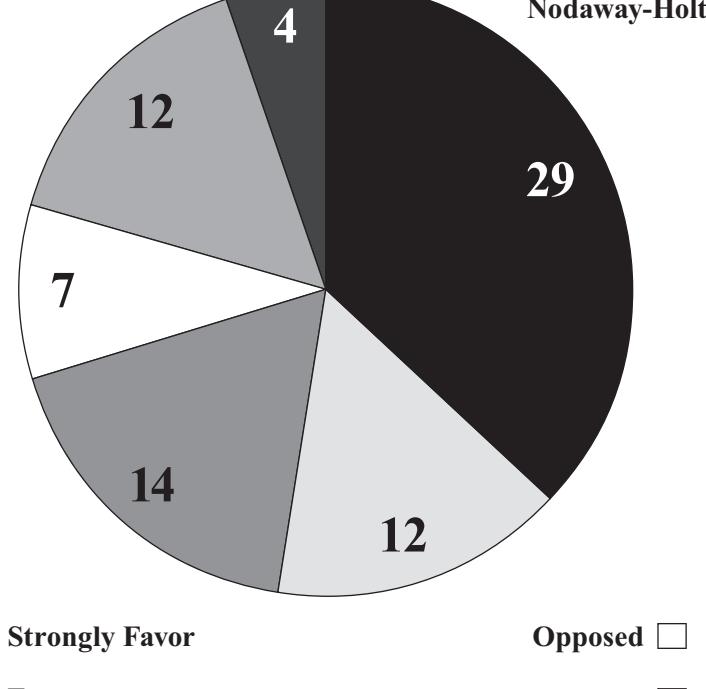


NICHOLAS SHUTTS | PHOTOGRAPHER

Northwest Junior Josh Westover works on homework in the fine arts lounge. He currently has to keep his mask on, but as Omicron weakens, there have been discussions on decreasing virus mitigation requirements.

Local schools consider four-day weeks, parents express concerns

PARENTS OPINION ON FOUR-DAY SCHOOL WEEK



GRAPHIC BY MAKAYLA POLAK DESIGN EDITOR

JAKE PRATER

News Reporter | @JakobLPrater

The West Nodaway School District will switch to a four-day week in the 2022-23 school year, as decided by a 4-3 vote by the West Nodaway Board of Education Feb. 9. The weekly schedule adds 20 minutes to each day while still meeting the 1,044 hours per school year required by the state of Missouri.

The four-day school week discussion was met with concerns from parents at the Jan. 26 West Nodaway School Board meeting. One parent in attendance, Tonya Andrews, asked why this is happening now.

"What has brought this on that we think we need a four-day week now?" Andrews asked. "What has spurred us to doing a four days instead of five days now, as opposed to waiting until things calm down a little bit and the changes we've made have set in?"

Other concerns were brought up, such as how West Nodaway would cut five minutes out of the scheduled lunch time, how stu-

dents would get to sports practices, and whether or not Monday should be the day off.

The Nodaway-Holt School District presented its case for a four-day school week in a board meeting. Its previous survey results showed parents in the community were overwhelmingly neutral on the topic.

The Feb. 2 parent-teacher forum was full of heated comments. According to the parent survey the school administered, out of the 69 responses from parents, only seven were opposed to the four-day week and 12 were strongly opposed, compared with the 29 who strongly favored and the 12 who favored the possibility.

At the Feb. 9 Nodaway-Holt meeting, the school board was shown a presentation on the subject. The presentation said Nodaway-Holt considered switching to a four-day week to attract potential teachers and staff, increase student and teacher attendance, and to create a more consistent school calendar, hopefully saving the school district money.

Similar to West Nodaway, Nodaway-Holt will maintain the total number of hours by adding 26 minutes to each day. With the proposed four-day calendar, Nodaway-Holt will still be above the state requirement at 1,084 hours.

Nodaway-Holt also confirmed that the day off would be Monday, which is the most widely used day off in Missouri schools.

If the Nodaway-Holt School Board votes in favor of the four-day week, the weekly schedule will be Tuesday through Friday with classes from 8 a.m.-3:36 p.m.

Throughout the meeting, Elementary Principal Shawn Emerson emphasized the need for more teachers due to a local shortage caused by pandemic.

"In my first year as principal, we didn't have a single applicant come out," Emerson said. "What happens if you have a math opening and you aren't doing innovative things to be on that forefront? What happens if you don't get an applicant? How do you teach our kids math?"

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Students get second round of relief money

This past weekend, student's who checked their emails found a message from Northwest. The email notified them that HEERF payments would once again be distributed this week.

HEERF funds are from the American Rescue Plan Act, which was put into place to help higher education institutions serve students and ensure learning continues during the pandemic, according to the U.S. Department of Education.

For the third distribution of HEERF funds, which was first approved by the Northwest Board of Regents to be appropriated in fall 2021, Northwest received just over \$6.8 million to be appropriated to students over the course of the fall, spring and summer semesters for the 2021-22 school year.

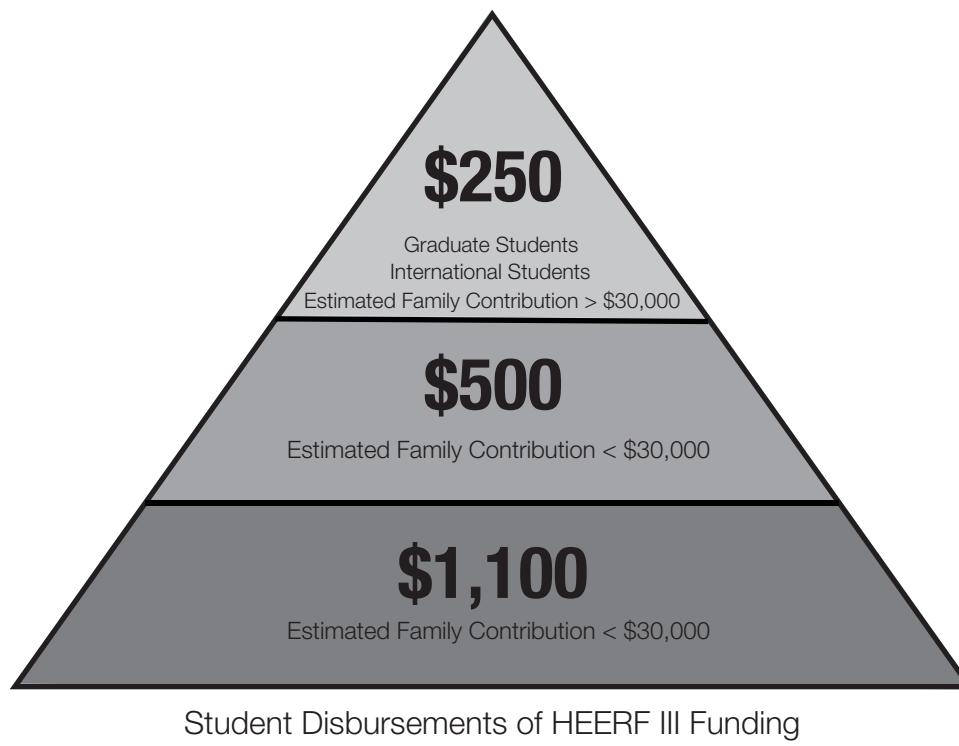
All money given to students is meant to be used for any component of their cost of attendance at the University or for any emergency costs that are due to COVID-19. For the spring student disbursement, over \$3.2 million dollars will be appropriated to over 6,900 students.

Students will be placed into three tiers of eligibility for HEERF funding, the same as the fall semester. The first tier is offering undergraduate, Pell Grant eligible students \$1,100. The next tier is for undergraduate students with an estimated family contribution under \$30,000 to be given \$500. The final tier is for undergraduate students with an EFC of more than \$30,000, online graduate students or international students to receive \$250.

The money given to students from the HEERF funding will go back into their account that is on file for direct deposit on their Northwest account, or it can be given back through a check sent to their permanent address on file.

On the other side of HEERF relief money, Northwest received just over \$6.7 million right to the institution.

Assistant Vice President of Finance Mary Collins said the money appropriated to the University had been used for student grants, student housing, dining refunds, COVID-19 mitigation, protective equipment, and air quality equipment and enhancements.



Student Disbursements of HEERF III Funding

\$6,861,615	\$6,767,962
Estimated Family Contribution < \$30,000	Estimated Family Contribution < \$30,000

HEERF III Funds for Northwest

SOURCE: NORTHWEST FINANCIAL AID

GRAPHIC BY SIDNEY LOWRY NEWS EDITOR

CRIME LOG

for the week of Feb. 17

Northwest Missouri State University Police Department

There is a closed investigation for invasion of privacy by **Logan D. Fainter**, 19, in Millikan Hall.

Feb. 15

There was a report of stealing in an unknown location off campus.

Feb. 13

There was a report of stealing in an unknown location off campus.

Maryville Police Department

Feb. 15

A summons was issued to **Sayak Chandra**, 24, for failure to appear in court on the 400 block of North Market Street.

Feb. 14

There was an accident between **Tucker Turner**, 17, and **Jaden M. Ferguson**, 21, on South Buchanan Street and West Jenkins Street. **Turner** was issued a citation for failure to yield for the right of way.

Feb. 12

A construction helmet was recovered on the 100 block of North Main Street.

A summons was issued to **Irina V. Younger**, 61, for driving while intoxicated on the 2100 block of South Main Street.

There was an accident between **Timothy G. Booth**, 27, and **Ava M. Limbo**, 21, on the 100 block of South Main Street.

Donald W. Yates, 79, was in a single-vehicle accident on the 2200 block of South Main Street.

There is an ongoing investigation for property damage in the 800 block of East Fourth Street.

Gracelyn M. Swank was in a single-vehicle accident on the 1600 block of South Main Street.

A summons was issued to **Clarissa P. Ferguson**, 34, for failure to appear in court on the 400 block of North Market Street.

A summons was issued to **Tyson J. Strohbeen**, 20, for possession of marijuana on the 1200 block of West 19th Street.

Feb. 9

There is an ongoing investigation for harassment on the 1600 block of South Main Street.

Jay R. Steady, 66, was in a single-vehicle accident on the 1300 block of South Main Street.



ADDALYNN BRADBURY PHOTO EDITOR

A Northwest graduate stands during the third commencement ceremony May 8. Over the three days, 1,275 students graduated and moved on to new chapters of their lives.

ENROLLMENT

CONTINUED FROM A1

Haddock said the specialist program was one of the programs that had the highest demand when it was first introduced.

"That one, when we went online, grew very quickly from just a few dozen to, you know, over 300. And this term is starting to push close to 400," Haddock said.

He said the graduate office was able to handle the influx of students because Northwest was able to easily find adjunct faculty due to the program being online.

As Northwest continues to add graduate programs and continues to recruit international and domestic students, its growth is expected to continue. Haddock said the growth hasn't shown signs of flat lining anytime soon.

"I'd rather have growing pains than the pains of reduced enrollment or something that would be a lot more problematic," Haddock said. "So I guess if you choose your problem, you choose growing pains rather than the reverse."

Despite having almost 30% of growth in graduate student enrollment compared to last spring, Northwest has seen a decline in first-time freshmen in

the fall semester and a 4.6% decrease in undergraduate enrollment compared to last spring.

Regardless of a decline in first-time freshmen enrollment numbers, retention is up to 92.1% from 89.8% last spring, and out-of-state enrollment increased from 34% to 38%.

International enrollment also increased from 5% to 10% of the student population following a decline caused by the pandemic and the rules set for international travel.

Northwest is now home to 733 international students from 39 different countries, and the majority of those students come from India, Nigeria and Nepal.

International Involvement Center Assistant Director Erika Lees said enrollment of international students increased by 50% and that the University had experienced a massive increase in applications from international students, so more applicants have been accepted than in past years.

"I think the demand is due to students not wanting to delay their education any longer because of the pandemic," Lees said. "We have seen applications from the areas we recruited in right before the pandemic, as well as through our virtual recruitment efforts during the pandemic."

COUNCIL

CONTINUED FROM A1

In order to help Mires, Mayor Benjamin Lipiec said that writing up a letter discussing his issues and dropping it off at City Hall would help them better understand and be able to reach out to others at the state level for help.

Later in the meeting, City Manager Greg McDanel said that despite some bumps in the road, the construction on the South Main Corridor Improvement Project Phase I is moving along 30 to 60 days ahead of schedule.

In the next few days, South Main Street will be down to two lanes as the construction switches from the west side to the east side of the street.

Part of South Main Street closed Feb. 8-9 to install a concrete pipe, but the installation was delayed another day to Feb. 10 after a semi truck driver tried to move around the construction damaged and brought down a powerline and three utility poles behind Scooter's Coffee.

McDanel said one of the construction workers on the South Main Corridor Improvement Project also brought down power lines, but Phase I of the project is still set to be finished ahead of schedule this October.

The Council also approved an ordinance for a supplemental agreement for the Torrance Street Trail Extension Project. This project will connect six trails from South Walnut Street to South Munn Avenue and will not exceed \$143,259.84.

This agreement will allow the six existing trails to be connected and will give residents pedestrian access to activity centers such as the Maryville Middle School, Maryville High School, St. Gregory Barbarigo Catholic School, Northwest Missouri State University, three public parks and Moasic Medical Center of Maryville.

The schedule outlined in the agreement requires a construction contract by July 29. Construction bids will open Feb. 16 and are hoped to be presented for approval at the Feb. 28 City Council meeting.

Other City Council Business:

The Council approved a road closure of the 300 block of North Market Street from 4-6 p.m. for Burny's Sports Bar & Upper Deck annual St. Patrick's Day Parade March 17.

The Council approved an ordinance to execute a contract with Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. not-to-exceed \$32,200 for professional consulting services for Lisa Lane/Nature Park Storm Drainage Improvements.

Maryville is still looking at options for funding Phase II of the South Main Corridor Improvement Project.

The Council approved an ordinance to join Show Me PACE to administer the Property Assessed Clean Energy Program.

The Council authorized the creation of the Façade Improvement Grant Program and adopted Façade Improvement Grant Program guidelines.

FOR THE CULTURE:

Madam C. J. Walker liberated Black hair

CORBIN SMITH
Opinion Editor
@curly_corbs

A quote from a 2020 Netflix series perfectly depicts the importance of hair in Black culture. Inspired by the life and character of one of the most influential women in history, it encapsulates her story and the experience we share as a community.

"Hair is beauty. Hair is emotion. Hair is our heritage. Hair is who we are, where we've been and where we are going. Hair is power. You can't imagine what it is like to lose it," Octavia Spencer's Madam C.J. Walker narrates in the opening minutes of the Netflix series "Self Made."

Walker is largely responsible for establishing the foundation of an essential part of our culture, and her name should be common in all communities.

Born Sarah Breedlove in 1867, Walker was the first of her parents' six children to be born out of slavery. After years of suffering from dandruff, baldness and scalp ailments from harsh hair products and work conditions, she experimented on her hair with various homemade and store-bought products. Deciding that being a sales agent for fellow Black entrepreneur Annie Malone wasn't enough, Walker began selling her own scalp conditioner and healing formula.

Since then, hair products have only grown in production and importance in Black culture. Without Walker's contributions, the natural hair movement would likely have progressed at an excruciatingly slow pace, and, collectively, Black people would lack an essential part of our identity.

Learning how to properly take care of your hair is a journey for all people of color. It took years of my younger sister's tough love to give my curls their perfect spring, and I'm still learning. My siblings, especially my sisters, and I gained a certain confidence after figuring out our hair care routines, and we take pride in our natural hair. That sense of pride drives the natural hair movement today.

For so long, Black hair has been frowned upon. It's been labeled too wild, too animalistic or too unprofessional. Really, it's just too much for some white people to handle. I wish I could say this was a Jim Crow era problem, but workplaces and schools are still refusing to accept Black hairstyles today.

Black people use their hair as a form of expression, self-love and activism. The Black community used to do hairstyles that helped it survive in a white society, but that's no longer necessary. Angela Davis, once the FBI's most-wanted activists, popularized the afro hairstyle in rebellion to '60s American cultural norms. Now, decades later, Black people should no longer be required to stick to the white status quo, and Walker should be credited more often with giving us the tools to break free when the time was right.

Not all contributions to the Black community have to break down barriers for equality; some just need to create a sturdy foundation for others to plant their feet on. Walker's efforts influenced generations of Black families, and with how far Black hairstyles have come, we should appreciate those who unknowingly constructed an essential part of our identity.



ALEXANDRIA MESZ CARTOONIST

OUR VIEW:

Student employees should be paid Missouri minimum wage

Missouri's minimum wage jumped to \$11.15 an hour Jan. 1 after a bill was passed in 2018, with an ultimate goal to reach \$12 an hour by January 2023. For anybody who desires higher wages for their part-time gigs, this is great news. For any students employed by Northwest, you might not want to quit that second job.

Currently, the University pays its student employees \$8.60 an hour.

As a state school, Northwest receives funding from Missouri in order to cover its expenses — including the payment of work-study positions. If a budget is created solely for the purpose of compensating students for their work, there should be enough money to pay them accordingly.

It makes sense that the University used to pay students based on the previous minimum wage — that's where the \$8.60 an hour comes from. However, it doesn't make sense why the University can't continue to follow the state's increase in minimum wage. If students are working, they should be compensated fairly for the work they do.

Other universities similar to Northwest have implemented higher wages successfully. Cross-interstate rival Missouri Western said no student

will be paid less than the current federal minimum wage at the time of employment, with a chance of earning more depending on your type of work. Missouri State starts pay at the current state minimum and increases pay ranges according to responsibilities.

The Missourian staff would be among those who would benefit from raised wages, but that's not the reason the Editorial Board is pushing for this change.

Students already have a full course load, which is why many often can't commit to the normal time commitments of part-time jobs off campus, choosing instead to work Northwest jobs to accommodate for their schedule. Students pay a literal price for this on every paycheck. The hour cap and low wage ensure the student bears a financial hit for working a job designed for their situation.

On-campus jobs are often the only jobs international students are able to acquire, whether it was a designed principle or an erroneous mistake. Effectively, the University is paying a lower wage to a portion of the population that is not able to go out and try to earn a higher one.

The University should do what it can to help students succeed while working toward bettering their future through ed-

ucation. Worrying about time commitments and how they're going to pay for rent is stressful.

Northwest doesn't need to make every student employee a millionaire. No student should expect to make a living out of any job they sign up for on campus. However, no student should be underpaid for the work they do.

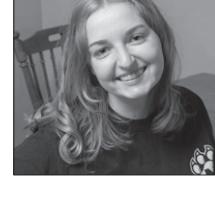
The Missourian doesn't believe unpaid internships are the best method of gathering experience in preparation for a career. It's an oft-predatory system designed to get free labor out of those interested in entering a field. Likewise, the lack of pay in exchange for experience gained through on-campus jobs isn't worth a student's financial stability.

Understandably, there is a budget, and there are limits set on how much of it can be spent. Although, with enrollment reaching new heights in recent years, it's hard to believe money is an issue.

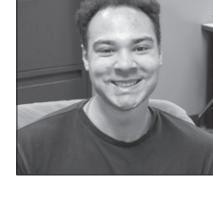
It's concerning that students could earn more money doing jobs unrelated to their desired careers rather than spending hours setting themselves up for a successful future. Students shouldn't be forced to make less for more meaningful opportunities. Northwest needs to pay its student employees better.

YOUR VIEW:
Should student minimum wage be the same as state minimum wage?HANNAH RICHTER
Student Instructor
Senior
Financial Management

"I think student employees should be paid state minimum wage. If everybody else off campus is getting that minimum wage, student jobs should too."

ELISHA WESTOVER
Student Recreation Attendant
Junior
Financial Management

"Yeah; I think it's unfair that minimum wage has risen every year while campus job pay hasn't."

ZACHARY WILLIS
Student Management, DI Office
Junior
Financial Management

"Yes, especially because we already have a limit on how many hours we can actually work in a week since we are students. I don't see why we can't at least get paid the minimum wage."

THE STROLLER:
Your Bearcat loves Winter Olympics

Most of you are liars. In recent weeks, I have conducted a poll of those around me — they're likely more accurate than the polls Hillary Clinton did in 2016. And the data shows me that you all claim to like the Winter Olympics more than their summer counterparts. You don't; none of you are watching it.

Beijing 2022 is experiencing problems because it snowed. Do you mean to tell me an entire athletic competition relying on weather is going to have issues dealing with weather? Are they going to delay rowing in the upcoming Summer Olympics because it rained in the host city?

The winter games are immensely worse. It's essentially just weeks of seeing which people can sled down which snowy, icy hill on which piece of plastic the fastest. Yes, when the middle-aged redhead one does the half-pipe thing, it's kind of cool, but other than that, I'll pass.

Each country's performance is

based on how generally chilly it is there during the year. It elevates Canada to a level of importance it should never be at in any athletic competition not hosted directly before, or after, a pancake breakfast.

Curling is the one sport that captures everyone's attention for a bit before they realize that all the dad memes used on the internet about curling were recycled from four years ago. You wanna see a cool sport for dads? Then make an Olympic sport out of withholding affection from your child because of moronic "masculine" standards. That's a real dad sport.

Go ahead though, keep claiming the winter games are better than the summer ones but continue to not watch them. I'm sure you couldn't watch them because you were too busy pretending to be in a happy relationship for Valentine's Day.

The Stroller has been a tradition since 1918 and does not reflect the views of The Northwest Missourian.

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Letters should be between 150 and 300 words and sent to k.calfee@missourian@gmail.com.

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UPCOMING GAMES

NW MBB

vs. Emporia State

7:30 p.m. Feb. 17
Bearcat Arena

vs. Washburn

3:30 p.m. Feb. 19
Bearcat Arena

@ Nebraska-Kearney

7:30 p.m. Feb. 23
Kearney, Nebraska

NW WBB

vs. Emporia State

5:30 p.m. Feb. 17
Bearcat Arena

vs. Washburn

1:30 p.m. Feb. 19
Bearcat Arena

@ Nebraska-Kearney

5:30 p.m. Feb. 23
Kearney, Nebraska

MHS WRES

@ State Tourney

Feb. 18-19

Columbia, Missouri

MHS GBB

vs. Savannah

6:30 p.m. Feb. 17
'Hound Pound

NW TEN

@ William Jewell

1 p.m. Feb. 18

Liberty, Missouri

NW BSB

MIAA/GLVC Crossover

Feb. 19-21

Joplin, Missouri

NW SFB

ESU Softball Classic

Feb. 18-20

Emporia, Kansas



ADDALYNN BRADBURY PHOTO EDITOR

In a file photo, the men's baseball head coach Darin Loe gives a sign to the batter during Northwest's April 2, 2021 game. Feb. 25 will be the Bearcats' first home game of the 2022 season against Central Missouri.

NW heads to crossover classic

LANDEN CRABTREE
Missourian Reporter | @NWMSports

Northwest baseball will travel Feb. 18 to Joplin, Missouri, for a three-game slate in the MIAA/GLVC crossover to finish its stretch of 10 straight road games to start the year.

Northwest (3-4) opens up the weekend against Truman State Feb. 18. Junior starting pitcher Max Spitzmiller will be on the mound, and he comes into the game with a 2.45 ERA and 17 strikeouts in 14 2/3 innings pitched. Spitzmiller is currently tied for ninth all-time in program history for strikeouts (148). He can move to seventh all-time with five more.

"I'm just gonna keep continuing the process of what I've been doing — going out competing, filling up the zone, challenging hitters to try not to waste pitches, get off the mound and get the bats back out," Spitzmiller said.

The Bearcats will play the following day against No. 21 Illinois Springfield. They will finish the weekend Feb. 20 against Quincy.

"Build on what we did the last two weekends," Coach Loe said. "Pitched well at times — trying to identify who we got coming in and who we can rely on to come in and throw strikes."

Northwest looks to continue their offensive scoring ability after scoring an average of 5 runs per game during the Henderson State Invitational Feb. 11-13 at Arkadelphia, Arkansas. Northwest plated 7 runs and 5 runs, respectively, during two victories over Ouachita Baptist and St. Cloud State. The Bearcats struggled to get the bats going early enough in their two defeats over the weekend.

"We are inconsistent, offensively — have seen some really good arms, and that is part of it," Loe said. "It will be big to get outside the next few days and be able to build on some of the positives and erase some of the negatives."

Northwest's lineup has been led at the plate by junior outfielder Donovan Warren, who currently leads the team in batting average (.333) with eight hits and a team-high 4 runs. Third baseman Brett Holden is batting (.320) and is tied with

Warren for runs and hits. Junior first baseman Tyler Peters launched the Bearcats' first home run of the season against No. 18 Henderson State, and he's currently on a five-game hitting streak.

"Last couple of weeks we got to see some very good arms. Just knowing that everyone on our team could hit those guys makes it a lot easier for us to continue our hot streak, been barreling the ball up a lot," Warren said about the offense's success to start the year.

Northwest will return home Feb. 20 to prepare for the beginning of MIAA play against No. 3 Central Missouri in a three-game series.

REVENGE

CONTINUED FROM A8

"I thought our intensity level, our intentionality, our energy, I thought was as good as it's honestly been all season long," McCollum said about the latest pair of back-to-back wins. "I didn't think we played phenomenal, but from all those other things, I thought we played very, very well. It's just a matter of now trying to sustain that kind of energy and intensity."

He just wishes it didn't take the loss to Emporia to see that out of his players, and he's hoping that's not the case the rest of the season, too.

"Sometimes those negative results help a little bit — a little suffering helps," McCollum said. "I think that, sometimes, if you need results to reset yourself, sometimes that's a slippery slope. It did reset us, but we can't keep getting reset with results

and negative results."

McCollum wouldn't define the toughness he's looking for the way most people would. He doesn't want his team to start a brawl every game. He doesn't want his players to just push themselves during practice, conditioning and weight-lifting sessions.

He simply wants his players to do what they didn't roughly a week ago, when the MIAA-best 'Cats uncharacteristically went 37.7% (20 of 53) and 19.2% (5 of 26) from deep. The struggles against Emporia marked the program's worst offensive output since a 55-51 win over Mervynhurst in the Elite Eight on March 27, 2019.

"Toughness is a little bit about — sometimes it's offensive, like, we need to get the shots we want. When we get a layup point-blank, we need to make that layup. We need to make sure we take care of the ball. We need to make sure we expose certain coverages they're in," McCollum said.

"Defensively, we need to sustain toughness throughout."

The defense McCollum mentioned was able to force the Hornets into some bad looks early in the contest, but their stagnance didn't last long.

Emporia's guard duo of South Dakota State transfer Tray Buchanan and senior Jumah Ri Turner, the highest-scoring tandem in Division II this season, combined for 49 points during the Hornets' largest upset in program history.

Still, McCollum felt comfortable about the Bearcats' defense in the aftermath of the loss, noting that the "defense was fine," but the offense was "absolutely atrocious."

He's not going to change too much on this week's scout, though, which will also feature a tad of scheming for Washburn, a conference opponent the 'Cats beat by 71-63 on the road in mid-January, and a conference opponent they'll host to close out the homestand Feb. 19

in Bearcat Arena.

Leaving the scouting reporting the same, or at least having to make minimal tweaks, McCollum said, is the luxury that comes with having to play most teams in the MIAA twice each season.

"You don't have to spend quite as much time getting the fine details of a scout down," McCollum said. "Now you can kind of itemize it to what they specifically exposed and what we were not able to expose. Hopefully, you can make those adjustments."

McCollum isn't exactly sure what he'll fine-tune for the second go-around with Emporia. He couldn't quite put his finger on any certain thing Tuesday afternoon.

He does, however, know it has to be something substantial enough to avoid another double-digit defeat.

"We gotta change about 20 points, I know that," McCollum said. "So, we gotta change something — 21, I think. I don't know; I lost track."

WOMEN

CONTINUED FROM A8

Northwest played Emporia the first time of the season Feb. 8 and defeated the Hornets 70-54 for the first win in White Auditorium since Jan. 2, 2002.

Nine days after the historic win, Northwest will match up with Emporia again in Bearcat Arena.

For the second game of the season between the two teams, Meyer said he's expecting the unexpected.

"They're a team that switches a lot of things up," Meyer said of the Hornets. "Against us last time, they played a box defense and then went to a triangle defense — we didn't see that from them all year. They might throw something new at us that we haven't seen all year. You got to be ready for anything."

Meyer said his team will watch film from the previous matchup, but he wants his play-

ers to be ready to adapt quickly during the game.

Senior guard Mallory McConkey, who totaled a season-high

27 points in the first contest against the Hornets, said she does expect it to be a little easier with the home crowd this time around.

"After this long road stretch, I mean, it's hard to go against the home crowd instead of having it," McConkey said. "Now, we'll have it."

"It's always good to be back and play on our home court," Meyer said.

Following the game against

Emporia, the Bearcats will take on three more teams before the end of the regular season — Washburn, Fort Hays State and Nebraska-Kearney — all three of which they lost to in the first half of the conference schedule.

In those three losses earlier in the season, Northwest lost by an average margin of 5 points.

With four regular season games left, the MIAA Tournament is right around the corner, and the team's fi-

nal games could prove important for seeding in the tournament. Northwest is currently

No. 7 in the MIAA.

While Meyer's not too focused on the postseason yet, he knows what Northwest is up against.

"We're just focused on one game at a time, you know," Meyer said. "But the tournament's gonna be crazy. You take the top 10 teams — well, all 10 teams are pretty darn good."

Sophomore forward Paityn

Rau said it will be a tough, eye-

opening final stretch of games before the postseason to see where the team is heading into it.

"This is a very pivotal time," Rau said. "We could pick up some big wins, and I'm 100% confident that we're capable of beating these teams we play next. We've done stuff this year that people haven't seen from Northwest in however many years. But we're not done yet, and we're ready to keep pushing."

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'When quality counts!'

Track and field gets preview of nationals at Gorilla Classic

DAVID DERKS
Missourian Reporter | @NWMSports

Fresh off the Seventh Annual Indoor Gorilla Classic Feb. 11-12 in Pittsburg, Kansas, Northwest indoor track and field had a lot to be excited about from one of its final regular-season meets.

Multiple Bearcats took the crown in their respective competitions, and others set personal bests against more than 40 schools.

"One of the best things is this meet was a very high-quality meet," coach Brandon Masters said. "Our kids got to go to the venue where the national championships are held and were able to compete like a mini national championship, so that was a really good thing for our kids to feel the track."

Masters said there were good marks from the men's and women's sides, but he also said there were some marks that weren't so good.

"A lot of our kids haven't had to travel this year since we have (the Carl and Cheryl Hughes Fieldhouse)," Masters said. "We don't

travel as much indoors, and so we learned a few things about traveling and how you need to prepare for your event. ... I feel like, for the most part, the kids competed hard, and that's what you look for."

Redshirt freshman Bailey Blake ran a time of 2 minutes, 13 seconds and 70 milliseconds in the 800-meter race, and although she got ninth place, she has already received a provisional mark in the 800 and is looking forward to next weekend.

"A goal of mine this year was just to get back to nationals and place at nationals," Blake said.

Blake competes in the 800, 600-yard dash and the 4x400-meter relay. She has a provisional mark in both the 600 and 800, and she'll be looking to get the final of her three provisional marks Feb. 25-27 at the MIAA Indoor Championships.

Redshirt freshman Prince Griffin, junior Jake Norris, senior Tucker Dahle and redshirt freshman Reece Smith earned a provisional mark in the distance medley relay after placing fifth

with a time of 9:48.45.

"I've had some expectations, and I've been able to hit some of them," Griffin said. "I've hit the 200 — I wanted to run a 22-low, possibly run a 21. ... So, just coming into conference, I'm hoping to run faster than I have all year long."

Last chance meet is scheduled for Feb. 18 in the Carl and Cheryl Hughes Fieldhouse for exactly that purpose - a last chance for those athletes who haven't hit provisional marks to try and do so.

"On the men's side, we're looking more at individual opportunities and not so much as a team — we're trying to get a big crew to nationals," Masters said. "This past weekend, we did not get it done on the men's side, as far as getting marks that we know will make it into the national championship. The women are really exciting right now. They've put together a great season."

"I feel like we're definitely healthy. We're doing the right stuff, and we're on track to put together a good meet."



ADDALYNN BRADBURY PHOTO EDITOR
Northwest senior Tucker Dahle and redshirt freshman Prince Griffin compete in the men's distance medley Feb. 4 in the Bearcat Open.

Maryville fends off late push to defeat Creston

JADEN FERGUSON
Missourian Reporter | @NWMSports

Maryville boys basketball narrowly escaped with a win over the Creston Panthers Feb. 15 in Creston, Iowa, for the last nonconference game of the regular season.

The Spoofhounds (11-11) came out strong in the first quarter and were able to take a 14-11 lead over the Panthers (7-15).

Maryville's dominance of Creston continued with sophomore Derek Quinlin and junior Caden Stoecklein setting the pace for the Spoofhounds' scoring throughout the first half. The duo combined for 28 of Maryville's 35 points by halftime. The Spoofhounds ended the half with a 35-28 lead over Creston.

The Spoofhounds continued their hot streak in the third quarter, building a 13-point lead behind Stoecklein's shooting and junior Keaton Stone, who had 11 points on the night. Maryville held Creston to a meager 7 points in the third quarter to lead the Panthers 48-35 heading into the fourth.

Maryville attained a 15-point lead with five minutes left in the game, but the Spoofhounds' hot streak sizzled out. Maryville turnovers allowed Creston to creep back within 3 points.

"We started off hot," Maryville coach Matt Stoecklein said. "We did a lot of good things and got ourselves a decent lead. We just couldn't hold onto that lead."

Creston junior guard Kyle Strider kicked off the scoring run with a 3-pointer, then the Pan-

thers were able to find one good shot after another against the 'Hounds defense.

"We turned the ball over and continued to take bad shots," Matt Stoecklein said. "It wasn't one person on their team that hurt us; it was primarily us that caused ourselves trouble."

Creston diminished the Spoofhounds' lead to 3 points with five seconds left, and that's when another Maryville turnover led to a half-court heave by Strider. The buzzer-beating prayer, the one that would've sent the Spoofhounds and Panthers to overtime, missed before falling to the gym floor, and the Spoofhounds escaped with a 62-59 victory.

"When he shot it, I was like, 'You've got to be kidding me.' It looked good, and it looked straight," Matt Stoecklein said. "I thought, 'Oh my gosh — it's going to go in.'"

Strider led the Panthers with 15 points, while Caden Stoecklein led Maryville with a game-high 30 points. Quinlin only scored 3 points in the second half, ending the game with 17.

The Spoofhounds escaped Iowa with a win. They have a quick turnaround before playing their last two MEC games on the road against the Savannah Savages Feb. 18 and the Chillicothe Hornets Feb. 24.

Matt Stoecklein hopes the team will learn from this game, he said, and the Spoofhounds can spark a streak entering postseason play.

"We need to get some momentum going into playoffs and learn how to finish a game and play hard and smart for four quarters," Matt Stoecklein said.



SILVIA ALBERTI | PHOTOGRAPHER
Maryville High School senior Spencer Wilnerd makes a contested layup during their game against Cameron Feb. 8 at the 'Hound Pound. The Spoofhounds swept the Dragons 74-68.

Girls hope to snap losing skid before districts

CORBIN SMITH
Sports Reporter | @curly_corsbs

On game days, Maryville coach Kelly Obley dons a green-and-white-striped sweater accessorized with beaming opti-

mism. After another nail-biting contest Feb. 14, a 51-49 loss to Cameron, Obley quickly highlighted how her Spoofhounds can grow moving forward in the dwindling season.

"You know, you want to win every game that you're in, but I think that playing in close games like this is really good for our group," Obley said. "We are going to be able to take so much from this. I think back to games earlier in January and how those close games helped propel the girls to success after."

With two games separating Maryville girls basketball (13-8) and the MSHSAA Class 4 District 16 Tournament, the Spoofhounds are hoping to end the 2021-22 season contrary to their current streak.

The loss to Cameron coupled with a 65-35 loss to Benton Feb. 10 marks the second losing streak of the season for the 'Hounds. Obley said there's "no easy nights" playing in the Midland Empire conference and credited both teams for playing at a high level.

Junior forward Rylee Vierthaler mirrors some of her coach's confidence and willingness to learn, a trait that's earned her a leadership role. After watching her team's six-game win streak crumble to a two-game losing skid, she's ready to find success again.

"Yeah, it's two steps forward, one step back," Vierthaler said. "We obviously went on a big win streak and beat some great teams

in our conference. With Benton and this last loss to Cameron, it's not what we wanted. When you lose, obviously, you learned, so that's kind of what we're focusing on — just being ready for districts because both of those teams are in our district."

"We're growing every single game, and that doesn't always show up in the win-loss column."

-KELLY OBLEY

MARYVILLE GIRLS BASKETBALL COACH

dence going against tougher opponents is key to finishing the season successfully.

Having a young team has been a factor all season. The continual growth is reassuring for Maryville, which is sometimes overshadowed by the Spoofhounds' record, Obley said.

"We're growing every single game, and that doesn't always show up in the win-loss column," Obley said. "For our freshmen, everything is the first time this year. Every game that they're playing, they're getting stronger, and they're growing more. We'll just keep taking that and keep pushing forward."

Although two games remain, district seedings are on the line. At this point in the season, each game will impact how the 'Hounds sit in the district tournament, especially the outcome of their rematch against Chillicothe Feb. 24.

However, Maryville will have to survive its last home game of the regular season Feb. 17 against Savannah before it can begin preparing for Chillicothe.

"We're such a young team, and I think something that kind of helps is we don't have as much expectations as everybody else does," Vierthaler said. "Each game is an improvement, and I feel really good about our team going into districts."

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Both Obley and Vierthaler said the 'Hounds have made small mistakes that should be easily fixed. Vierthaler said a mixture of not playing "frazzled" like they have in recent games and building confi-

Growing pains

MHS girls basketball faces losing skid before postseason. [see A7](#)

SPORTS

Feb. 17, 2022 | [@NWMSports](#) 

NCAA tabs NW men at fourth in region

JON WALKER
Sports Editor | [@ByJonWalker](#)

Northwest men's basketball has been slated at fourth in the first Division II Central Region rankings of the year, the NCAA announced on its website Wednesday afternoon.

The Bearcats were contending for the region's top seed before being handed an upset loss from MIAA foe Emporia State Feb. 8 in Emporia, Kansas. Now, if the season ended Wednesday, top-seeded Augustana would host the Central Region Tournament March 12-15 at the Sanford Pentagon in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

At the moment, the Bearcats would play fifth-seeded MIAA foe Central Oklahoma, an opponent that handed Northwest its second loss of the season with a 76-75 upset win Jan. 20 in Edmond, Oklahoma.

The full rankings include No. 1 Augustana (21-2), No. 2 Upper Iowa (22-4), No. 3 Minnesota Duluth (21-4), No. 4 Northwest (23-3), No. 5 Central Oklahoma (20-4), No. 6 Fort Hays State (19-4), No. 7 Southeastern Oklahoma State (17-5), No. 8 Southern Nazarene (17-7) No. 9 Wayne State (13-10) and No. 10 Winona State (14-9).

Only the top eight teams will make the Central Region Tournament — a two-team difference from the 2020-21 season, when the NCAA adjusted to COVID-19 cancellations by limiting each regional bracket to six teams.

There will continue to be weekly rankings until the final ones on March 6, the same day as the title game of the MIAA Tournament. The finalized rankings will be released that night on the NCAA Division II Selection Show.

Northwest is tied with Minnesota Duluth for the most wins in the region (20), though the 'Cats have one less loss than the Bulldogs, who are a part of the Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference (NSIC).

The last few weeks of the regular season will be important for the 'Cats, who, as of Feb. 16, will have four regular-season games left to improve on their in-region ranking before the MIAA Tournament March 2-6 in downtown Kansas City, Missouri.

There, Northwest could gain ground on top-three teams by claiming a seventh conference tournament title in eight seasons. The 'Cats could run into the other ranked MIAA teams, Central Oklahoma and Hays, at Municipal Auditorium before the final rankings are released.

The Bearcats — who fell five spots to No. 7 in this week's NABC Division II poll following the aforementioned loss to Emporia and out of the top five for the first time in 57 polls — will have a chance to improve their in-region record and exact revenge on the Hornets when the two meet Feb. 17 in Bearcat Arena.



JON WALKER SPORTS EDITOR

Northwest men's basketball redshirt freshman guard Isaiah Jackson drives past a defender during the Bearcats' 75-56 loss to Emporia State Feb. 8 in Emporia, Kansas. It was the program's largest loss since February 2017.

No. 7 'Cats aim to exact revenge on Emporia St.

JON WALKER
Sports Editor | [@ByJonWalker](#)

There wasn't much that immediately came to Ben McCollum's mind following Northwest men's basketball's third loss of the season — a 75-56 trouncing courtesy of MIAA foe Emporia State Feb. 8 in Emporia, Kansas.

But the 13th-year coach knew, with certainty, his team had to get tough. He also knew the Bearcats didn't have long before their next meeting with the Hornets.

"We gotta get tougher if we're gonna be able to beat a team like that. We're not tough enough to beat them quite yet," McCollum said Feb. 8 at William Lindsay White Civic Auditorium. "We've got eight days to figure it out."

That time has now come for the No. 7 'Cats (23-3, 16-2 MIAA), who will host Emporia Feb. 17 in Bearcat Arena for the second and fi-

nal regular-season meeting between the two. It'll serve as the start of a two-game homestand for Northwest.

Before McCollum and company could directly turn their attention to avenging the program's largest loss since February 2017, they had to finish a four-game road trip with matchups against MIAA foes Pitt State and Missouri Southern.

And after their five-game win streak dissipated with their second loss in a month's span, the Bearcats got back on track with an 80-68 win over Pitt Feb. 10 and 71-64 win over Southern Feb. 12.

Those matchups, McCollum said, gave him a glimpse at what his team will need to carry throughout the rest of this season and as soon as Thursday night.

SEE REVENGE | A6



JON WALKER SPORTS EDITOR

Northwest women's basketball senior guard Mallory McConkey runs down the floor during the Bearcats' 70-54 win over MIAA foe Emporia State Feb. 8 in Emporia, Kansas. McConkey tied her season high with 27 points.

Women hope to 'play well' during final four games

WESLEY MILLER
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After four consecutive road games, Northwest women's basketball will return to Bearcat Arena for three of its final four regular-season games.

The Bearcats traveled to play MIAA foes Missouri Western, Emporia State, Pittsburg State and Missouri Southern between Feb. 5-12.

The trip to Emporia, Kansas, the second of the four-game trip, was the only one of the four to end in a victory for Northwest.

"The league is obviously really good, and we gotta be able to make a few more plays," coach Austin Meyer said.

The MIAA this season has lived up to its reputation as one of the toughest conferences in Division II.

Through 24 games for each of the 14 teams, nine have winning conference records and 10 are above .500 overall, including Northwest at 15-9 overall and 10-8 in the MIAA.

Despite losing four out of the last five games, Meyer said he's confident about his team heading into the final part of the regular season.

"I think we're in a good spot," Meyer said. "We're prepared. We played really good teams. We've been in every single game we've played this year ... and just got to find a way to play well and be solid down the stretch."

The 'Cats will start their mission of having a solid end to the season with the team they last won against.

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